



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality
99 Chauncy Street, 2nd Floor, Boston, MA 02111
617-753-8000

DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

JUDYANN BIGBY, MD
SECRETARY

JOHN AUERBACH
COMMISSIONER

Circular Letter: DHCQ 09-01-504

TO: Chief Executive Officers, Massachusetts Acute Care Hospitals

FROM: Paul Dreyer, Ph.D., Director

SUBJECT: Hospital Fire Safety and Evacuation Plans: Surges in Patient Volume/Boarding

DATE: January 14, 2009

The intent of this letter is to inform you that the Department of Public Health (DPH) has been working collaboratively with the Department of Fire Services (DFS) to address hospital fire protection and evacuation plans relative to the ongoing problems of hospital emergency department crowding and patient boarding.

The Department of Fire Services recommends that hospital fire protection and evacuation plans be reviewed and updated in conjunction with the implementation of the restriction on ambulance diversion. The DFS has developed guidance to assist local fire departments and hospitals in the review and assessment of emergency hospital plans while acknowledging the realities of crowded hospitals and surges in patient volume. Please refer to the attached *Memorandum from the DFS to Heads of Fire Departments*. We encourage hospitals to work with their local fire departments in emergency planning for surge conditions and patient boarding.

cc: Stephen Coan, State Fire Marshal
Anuj Goel, MHA